

Did you know....

FACT #1 - The overwhelming majority of men who were of military age during the Vietnam era did not serve in the military. It is simply untrue to suggest that everyone gave two years of his life to the country and that therefore the war resisters should not get off scot-free. Fewer than 10% of the draftable manpower pool was ever drafted. Millions of men found quasi-legal avenues of escape from the draft. Almost every young man whose parents were rich enough to send him to college and get him a 2-S deferment escaped the draft. Men by the tens of thousands avoided the draft through medical, psychiatric, technical and athletic deferments, in the ministry, in teaching and other professional enclaves.

FACT #2 - Of the 424,805 less than honorable discharges given during the Vietnam era 392,711 were given administratively. This means at the discretion of the commanding officer - no trial is held, the person is not allowed to question accusers and very often is not even at the hearing. Reasons for an administrative discharge include: alcoholism, "important to national health", homosexual tendencies, failure to demonstrate adequate potential for advancement, etc.. Less than honorable discharges carry with them severe penalties for life including loss of veterans' benefits, disqualifications for civil service and other employment, etc.

FACT #3 - To exclude those with less than honorable discharges from an unconditional amnesty would discriminate again, as the draft did, against men and women from minority communities and from the less well educated and poorer segments of society.

FACT #4 - According to most recent research results there are 11,895 Minnesotans who would benefit from an unconditional amnesty.

FACT #5 - According to statistics compiled from the Selective Service, the Defense Department, and the Veterans Administration there are over 500,000 men and women in need of unconditional amnesty as a result of the Vietnam war.

FACT #6 - Amnesty by its very nature relates to whole classes of political offenders. A case-by-case review of the moral, religious, or political reasons of hundreds of thousands of young men and women is therefore uncalled for. Aside from the overwhelming burden this would put on the judiciary or the administration, it must also be remembered that extremely delicate judgments would have to be made about the convictions held by these people years earlier when the act of war resistance occurred. Another, very important consequence is that this method would again discriminate in favor of the educated and articulate, who can communicate to some tribunal the depth of their convictions. The minorities and less well educated would loose again.

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